



During most dual meets there is an office staff consisting of a Computer Software Operator, a Scorer and a Scoreboard Operator. There may be other positions as well, perhaps associated with the on-deck portion of the meet but working from the office. Often these positions are filled by parent volunteers. Their training varies, and their experience level can run anywhere from a first attempt to a multi-season veteran. There is usually a volunteer leader of some type in the office. Most have a limited knowledge of the NFHS rules and may be more familiar with swimming rules from other organizations if their child has participated in age group swimming. Often as their last child leaves high school swimming the parent “resigns” their position on the office staff. Most schools do not seem to have a succession plan in place for these positions. A few fortunate schools have parents who were performing the same tasks for middle school teams of age group teams. This is the exception rather than the rule. You will need to access the group you are working with and talk to them about their background before the meet starts. You must also monitor their work as the meet progresses.

You Can’t Officiate What You Can’t See

You arrive at the competition pool. It is an 8-lane facility, with competitors assigned to all 8 lanes. You are the only official. As you stand at the mid-point of the pool you can see the bottom fairly well. As you look at the starting and turn ends of the pool you can not clearly make out the turn pads in lane 7 and 8 nor the turn

walls in the opposite end of the pool. Upon closer inspection you notice that several overhead lights are out over the start end of the pool above lane 8 and all 4 under water lights are out in the shallow end of the pool next to lane 8. How do you proceed?

First, try the simple route: are all the lights turned on? In some instances, School Administrators have directed that lighting in the pool be reduced by indicating specific lights or percentages of lights to be turned off to reduce operating costs. Second, direct the meet be reassigned to six competing lanes, the ones you can see. Third, obtain a second official for the meet who will be tasked with watching those lanes 7 and 8 along with his/her other duties. If you believe it is going to be a problem notify the Meet Manager or Host Head Coach as early as possible and task them with getting the issue resolved. Try to work with the host facility to solve the problem. Using lanes 7 and 8 which you can not see, for exhibition swimmers is not an option as they are required to compete under the same conditions as scoring swimmers inclusive of judging. Ultimately if the problem is not resolved prior to the meet and the host facility is unwilling or unable to correct the problem the meet should be declared a forfeit. Remember: “YOU CAN’T OFFICIATE WHAT YOU CAN’T SEE.”

Something to Consider: What rule requires exhibition swimmers to be judgeable when they compete?

Our Last Consideration: Situation 2.4.5 A last phrase last sentence “and the referee should report the problem to the host school’s administration”